Sir. In conformity with the wish of the Director of the Mint I herewith offer a few remarks on the letters (of the 16th June) of the Assayer & Melter & Refiner to the Superintendent of the U. States Assay Office, New York on the subject of silver containing selenium.

The presence of selenium in some of our silver bars, & its various injurious influence, have been so well handled by the Assayer of this Mint, that I cannot add anything to his statements & conclusions, except that they resolved some hitherto unexplained difficulties in working silver, to the satisfaction of all the officers of the Mint, who thought that the interchange of observation & thought on the subject might prove of value to the public service.

I therefore confine myself to that portion of Mr. Mason's letter which, after a hasty dismissal of the selenium question, consists of his often repeated solicitation that he may be allowed to forward to this Mint (p. 4) from the Assay Office silver of a less fineness than 997 ‰, on the grounds, that such an arrangement "would avoid all trouble concerning direct shipments to the Mint", — and that "the expense of taking copper out of thousands of ounces (to be put in again) would be saved to the Govt."

I regret to perceive

1. I cannot perceive how the sending of fine silver of less weight than the same silver with copper would surely (cannot purely) on the ground of weight I cannot conceive how the sending of fine silver would avoid any more trouble in shipment than the same silver alloyed with copper: If "the avoidance of trouble" means the avoidance of the necessity of taking out the copper, then this

ground falls in with ~~the last~~ second ground, ~~and~~ & the meaning conveyed is that it is troublesome & costly needless to separate copper from silver ~~so as to ship and to~~ instead of shipping the alloy ~~to be~~ of silver & copper direct without modification

It is no more trouble for us to receive fine silver than ~~the~~ when it is alloyed with copper; but of course it is more troublesome to the Assay Office to make it fine. There is a fallacy underlying the assertion that the Govt loses all the ~~cost~~ of taking out copper from silver, when ~~the~~ copper is to be put in again. ~~We do not pay that~~ We have to extract ~~take~~ the copper ~~out~~, in order to ~~get out~~ remove small quantities of associated metals, which harden & embrittle our coin alloy, & unless we take out ~~the~~ all the copper we cannot be sure of removing ~~those~~ embrittling associates. By taking out all ~~these~~ metallic ~~elements~~ we have commercially pure silver left to which we add the highest grade of commercially pure copper, & thus insure ~~the softness with more certainty~~ ~~that~~ that ~~combination~~ medium degree of hardness, without brittleness, which characterises our coin.

I ~~suppose~~ Mr Mason means that it is troublesom, costly & needless to separate copper from a silver & ship the silver alone ~~alone~~ alloy instead of shipping the alloy ~~direct without treatment~~, & using it directly in coin.

Objections to any other than fine silver. Experience showed that when by agreement we ~~we had~~ agreed to received silver of 900 @ 950 ~~we not only had co~~ as not being ~~suitable~~ for coinage according to agreement we had to complain of it constantly, because ~~depending it would not work well in coining~~ — a large portion was daily returned by the Coiner to the M.T.R. to remelted & fluxed to make it suitable for coinage, in spite of the agreem.t to deliver only what was suitable for coinage ~~There was not~~ The cost of remelting, embracing loss of materials used loss of time of men, & above all wastage of silver, — more than covered the cost it would have been to have refined the silver to over 999 & then put in pure copper.